

REMARKS

Claims 106-136 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 137-173 are added. Claims 137-173 are supported throughout the specification as filed, including the paragraph bridging pages 4-5 of the specification and the original claims.

It is respectfully submitted that the present amendment presents no new issues or new matter and places this case in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is requested.

I. Request for Continued Examination

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's entry of the Request for Continued Examination and Amendment.

II. Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's consideration of the information disclosure statement.

III. The Rejection of Claims 106-136 under 35 U.S.C. 112 (Written Description)

Claims 106-136 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The written description rejection is again traversed for the reasons of record. Nevertheless, solely to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended the claims to recite isolated variants of a laccase, wherein the variant has laccase activity and has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 10 except for a substitution at one or more mutations or substitutions and isolated laccase variants having a homology of at least 90% with the laccase of SEQ ID NO: 1. Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims fully comport with the written description requirement.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the amended claims overcome this rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

IV. The Rejection of Claims 106-136 under 35 U.S.C. 112 (Enablement)

Claims 106-136 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph as allegedly lacking enablement. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The enablement rejection is again traversed for the reasons of record. Nevertheless, solely to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended the claims to recite isolated variants of a laccase, wherein the variant has laccase activity and has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 10 except for a substitution at one or more mutations or substitutions and isolated laccase variants having a homology of at least 90% with the laccase of SEQ ID NO: 1. Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims fully comport with the enablement requirement.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the amended claims overcome this rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

V. The Rejection of Claims 119-120, 122, 125-127 and 131-135 under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 119-120, 122 and 132 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Germann et al., Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 83, 8854-8858 (1986) ("Germann"). Claims 119, 125-127 and 131-135 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Fernandez-Larrea et al., Mol. Gen. Genet. 252(5), 539-551 (1996) ("Fernandez-Larrea"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As set forth in Applicants' prior responses, Germann et al. disclose a wild-type laccase obtained from *Neurospora crassa*. Therefore, the laccase described in Germann et al. does not contain any mutations, including any of the substitutions recited in the former claims.

In particular, Germann et al. do not disclose laccase variants, as claimed herein. Moreover, Germann et al. do not disclose any laccase variants comprising a substitution selected from the group consisting of A108F, A108I, A108L, A108P, A108W, and A108Y.

Similarly, Fernandez-Larrea et al. disclose a wild-type laccase obtained from *Podospira anserina*. Therefore, the laccase described in Fernandez-Larrea et al. does not contain any mutations, including any of the substitutions recited in the former claims.

In particular, Fernandez-Larrea et al. do not disclose laccase variants, as claimed herein. Moreover, Fernandez-Larrea et al. do not disclose any laccase variants comprising a substitution at a position selected from the group consisting of 185, 187, 189, 191, 193, 234, 235, 236, 269, 293, and 294.

Nevertheless, solely to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended the claims to recite isolated variants of a laccase, wherein the variant has laccase activity and has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 10 except for a substitution at one or more mutations or substitutions and isolated laccase variants having a homology of at least 90% with the laccase of

SEQ ID NO: 1. None of the cited references teach or suggest the variants of Applicants' amended claims.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the amended claims overcome this rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

VI. Conclusion

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance. Early action to that end is respectfully requested. The Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if there are any questions concerning this amendment or application.

Please charge all required fees to Novozymes North America, Inc.'s Deposit Account No. 50-1701 at the time of electronic filing. The USPTO is authorized to charge this Deposit Account should any additional fees be due.

Respectfully submitted,

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